

**NEW DATA ON CRYPTOBLEPHARUS FUHNI, A POORLY KNOWN SKINK FROM QUEENSLAND.**

*Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 35(1) 234, 1994: - *Cryptoblepharus fuhni* Covacevich & Ingram, 1978 is known only from its type locality, the Melville Range (14°16'S, 144°30'E) on Cape York Peninsula. This range is composed entirely of granite boulders. *C. fuhni* is recognised as warranting special status in management plans by McDonald et al. (1991), as '2RC' i.e. '...with a very restricted distribution ... with a maximum geographic distribution of less than 100km ... rare ... but not currently considered endangered or vulnerable ... within a national park...'

Description of *C. fuhni* was based solely on museum specimens (8), all of which had been damaged by dust shot. A photograph of living *C. fuhni* was not available for the description, and none has been published in any of the major identification guides to Australia reptiles. (e.g. Wilson & Knowles, 1988; Ehmann, 1992; Cogger, 1992). No additional specimens of *C. fuhni* have been collected, and it remains poorly known, presumably because of the remoteness of the Melville Range.

In September, 1992, I visited the type locality of *C. fuhni* from Bathurst Bay (14°13'S, 144°22'E) to Cape Melville (14°10'S, 144°30'E) and was able to photograph (Figs 1-3), and examine closely specimens of *C. fuhni* from different parts of the range.

The colour and pattern description of *C. fuhni* of Covacevich & Ingram (1978) is accurate. The type specimens are young adults. All were collected on black boulders remote

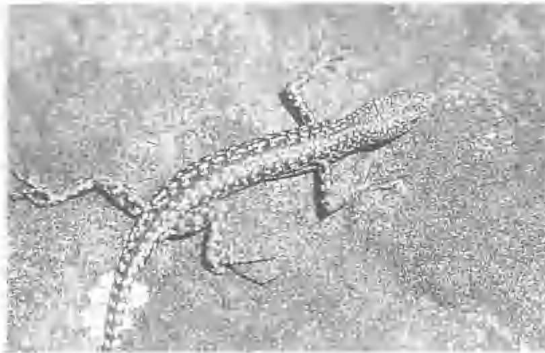


FIG. 1. *C. fuhni* juvenile, from black boulders near Bathurst Bay.



FIG. 2. *C. fuhni* old adult, from black boulders near Bathurst Bay.



FIG. 3. *C. fuhni* typical pale-coloured specimen, from pale sea-washed boulders, Cape Melville.

from the sea, near Bathurst Bay (J. Covacevich, pers. comm.). Juveniles from this area are similar, but more distinctly patterned. Large, apparently old adult specimens have the same pattern as juveniles and young adults, but it is poorly defined and on a dull brown-black background (vs black). At Cape Melville the boulders of the range enter the sea, and are wave-washed to a pale grey. Here the skinks retain the distinct pattern, but have a pale greyish background colour.

Individuals of *C. fuhni* are very common on the Melville Range. They are extremely agile, fast-moving skinks which spend the day foraging on the boulder faces. During the hottest part of the day, they retreat to crevices and cracks in the boulders or into the deep shade between them.

#### Acknowledgements

Jeanette Covacevich alerted me to the value of these photographs and assisted me to present this note.

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